Token of Appreciation

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Token of Appreciation

by sourweather

Summary

It's the dumbest thing he's ever done, jumping in front of a moving car. But at least he was saving a life, this time, which made it seem a bit less moronic.

Notes

idk i was depressed and it was 5 am and I....love nigel

Nigel wakes up to the sound of beeping. It's fucking annoying, rhythmic and piercing his sore skull. His head hurts. He stretches, and winces in pain. Correction- everything fucking hurts. Especially his right arm. Feels like his shoulder got fucking popped out of the socket. He cracks an eye open, and groans at the fluorescents driving another nail into his head.

He's in a hospital room. Laid up in one of those uncomfortable beds with a bunch of wires and shit coming off of his body. His arm's in a cast. So is his leg.

"Fuck," he mutters, and his mouth feels like it's full of pebbles.

"Christ, you scared the shit out of me."

He frowns in the direction of a familiar voice. Darko, sitting in a chair near his bed. There's a worn-looking book sitting on his lap. Dracula. Why the fuck is everybody reading Dracula these days?

"Darko..."

"You've been sleeping like a fucking corpse, Ni. Here, let me call a nurse. You feeling okay? Who am I fucking kidding, tell 'em you feel like hell, they'll give you better dope that way."

Nigel almost smiles at that. "What did I do this time?" he asks, watching Darko stab at the call button. "Was it as stupid as the time I got a bullet in the skull?"

Darko snorts. "Stupider, if you can believe it. You jumped in front of a moving fucking car."

That's all it takes for the memories to flood back. He'd been leaving his apartment, on the way to the liquor store. As he was about to cross the street, he saw the beautiful boy from his building walking a short ways ahead of him. Blue Eyes, Nigel calls him. In his head, anyway. They've never actually spoken to each other, but fuck, he is breathtaking. So Nigel was trying to catch up with him, when out of nowhere this fucker in a shitty fucking Pontiac speeds through the middle of the crosswalk, headed straight for Blue Eyes. And Nigel—

"Blue Eyes..."

Darko frowns at him. "What?"

"Blue Eyes," he reiterates. "The fucking kid, Darko. Is he okay?"

The other man blinks. "You mean Adam? He's fine. Fit as a fucking fiddle, thanks to you."

Nigel narrows his eyes, relaxing back against the pillows. Shit, he's sore. "You know his name?"

"I should call him," Darko says, mostly to himself. "He'll wanna know you're awake."

"You've been... you've been talking to Blue Eyes?"

"He's not gonna like you calling him that, you know."

Nigel's about to tell him to fuck off, but then the phone is ringing under the sound of the machines. He can't quite hear the other voice on the phone, so he settles for listening to Darko's side of things.

"Hey, Adam. Y- yeah, I know you said... yeah, but— okay I know it's not your fucking break yet, bud, but Nigel's up, and I know you wanted me to tell you. ...You sure? You don't have to — shit, okay, man. I'll see you in a few, then."

Nigel gives Darko the most suspicious look he can manage.

"He's taking an early lunch so he can come and see you."

Nigel drags a hand down his face. "Darko, if you don't start making some fucking sense, I'm getting up and walking right back into fucking traffic."

Darko smirks. "You saved Adam's life, Ni. Pushed him out of harm's way and got hit by a car for your trouble. Kid thinks you're a god damned saint. He followed you to the hospital, waited with you until I could take over. He's been visiting you every day."

His heart flips without his permission. "Yeah?"

Darko nods.

"What... what's he like?"

"He's a good kid," Darko replies. "Too fucking good for you, that's for sure."

Nigel just rolls his eyes and waits for Darko to continue.

"He's smart. Some kind of scientist, I think. Awkward, though. Shy— well, he's got Autism."

"What makes you say that?"

Darko gives him a pointed look. "He told me, dumbass. But Bevy's got a sister with Autism, so I had a hunch already."

Nigel hums. "What do you two talk about?"

"You, mainly."

He chokes on his next breath. Darko just laughs at him.

"Shit. What did you tell him about me?"

"The truth, unfortunately for you," Darko quips.

Nigel shuts his eyes, groans.

The other man huffs. "I told him you were a fucking moron who used his cock more than his brain, but you had a big heart– Alright?"

Nigel sighs. "Yeah, alright."

"And that you were single."

Another cough.

"He asked!"

His heart is pounding now. "Fuck."

"I'm gonna see where that nurse is with your meds, yeah? Sit tight."

As Nigel watches Darko leave, a fresh wave of fatigue washes over him. Christ, he's exhausted. His eyes drift closed...

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"Rise and shine, asshole."

Nigel grunts, still half-asleep. "Anybody ever tell you your bedside manner's fucking terrible?"

"Hello, Nigel."

He blinks, suddenly fully alert. There he is. Thin, delicate frame, pretty soft features, fluffy dark curls, and wide, beautiful- "Blue Eyes."

Blue Eyes frowns slightly. "My name is Adam," he clarifies.

"Course it is," Nigel says. "How have you been, gorgeous?"

Darko moves for the door. "Alright, I'm gonna go have a smoke. Be back in a few." And with a quick wink sent Nigel's way, he's gone.

Adam wrings his hands, taking a few nervous steps closer to his bedside. "How are you feeling?" he asks, eyes tracing the hem of Nigel's thin blanket.

Nigel tries to shrug, and winces at the pain it causes. "I've had worse."

Adam tilts his head in curiosity. "You have?"

Nigel nods. "Been shot before. More than once, actually."

"Darko mentioned that you have a... a dangerous job," Adam says, visibly anxious.

"Had," Nigel is quick to correct. Why the fuck did Darko tell him that? "Worst I get now is the occasional fistfight. I'm just a bartender."

Adam blinks, his eyes wide. "Oh, I wasn't— I didn't mean to sound judgemental, I was just thinking. Well, that must be why you were so quick to act, the other day. No room for hesitation, just action."

That takes Nigel by surprise. "I... yeah, I guess so."

Adam smiles softly. "I still can't believe you pushed me out of the way. You don't even know me."

"I do."

Adam frowns at him, and Nigel clears his throat nervously.

"I uh, you live in my building, I mean. I've seen you before."

He chooses to omit the fact that he's tried to work up the courage to go knocking on his door at least a dozen fucking times, and the fact that he times his laundry trips to line up with Adam's, and that he sometimes watches Adam lugging his telescope off toward the park from his balcony at night.

Adam's face quickly lifts back into a pleased smile. "Oh! I didn't know that. Well, it's nice to meet you, then."

Nigel smiles. "Likewise. Wish it was under better circumstances, but I'll fuckin take it."

Adam hums. He runs his fingers along the edge of the blanket. His brows furrow. "I am very grateful that you saved me," he says quietly. "But I feel terrible that you were injured because of me. Is there anything I can do, to make it up to you?"

"You don't have to worry about that, Blue Eyes. Really."

"There must be something I could offer you."

He feels his face grow hot. "W-well," he tries. "I'm probably gonna be stuck at home for a while, once they let me out of here. Maybe you could make your way over to apartment 3F sometime? Keep me company?"

Adam tilts his head. "That doesn't sound like a good enough thank you at all."

Nigel chuckles. It hurts. It's worth it. "Pretty little thing like you, wasting your time in that dump with a guy like me? It's more than enough. You're getting the short fucking end of the bargain, if I'm honest with you."

"You saved my life, Nigel," Adam insists, and he finally looks Nigel in the face. Beautiful eyes trained on his mouth. "And I would spend time with you, anyway. Ask me for something else."

His heart fucking skips a beat at that. "Cook me dinner, then. How about that? Come over, have dinner with me. Hell, I'll even make you sit through a movie. That'll be plenty."

Adam hums, frowning to himself. "I want to show you how much it means to me," he mumbles.

It tugs at his heartstrings, but Nigel sighs. "Look, gorgeous, I don't know what Darko told you about me but I'm not gonna let you pay me for-"

His mind freezes when warm, soft lips brush his own. Adam hovers within reach for a few dreamlike moments before he kisses Nigel again, again. On the third kiss, Nigel finally fucking comprehends what's happening and starts kissing back. He feels Adam's lips curve into a smile, and then a soft palm is cupping his swollen jaw. Nigel sighs, his fingers threading into Adam's luscious curls—

The sound of a throat clearing in the doorway makes Adam pull back out of reach. When Nigel sees Darko standing there, he curses in Romanian before shouting at him in their native tongue.

"What the fuck is wrong with you? Couldn't give us five minutes?"

"I didn't want some poor nurse to see you getting a hard-on over a kiss like a fucking fifteen year old!" Darko shouts back.

Adam looks between them, blissfully unaware of what's being said. He smiles at Nigel, blushing beautifully.

"I can't stay long," he explains with no shortage of regret. "I just wanted to see you, to thank you in person. But... well, I get off in a few hours. Do you want me to bring you some food? We could eat, and get to know each other a bit better."

Shit, maybe getting hit by a car was a good thing, in the long run. "Sure, Blue Eyes. Sounds good."

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